

Virus Control In Eating Establishments

Recommendations for virus control

1. Review and reinforce employee health policies
2. Comply with the Maine Food Code
3. Promote additional handwashing
4. Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces such as hand rails, door knobs, ketchup bottles, salt and pepper shakers
5. Have standard operating procedures on cleaning, sanitizing, and using the proper chemicals
6. Provide hand sanitizers for customers before and after buffet use
7. Frequently change utensils at buffets
8. In facilities with air dryers only, provide paper towels in restrooms to shut off water after handwashing and to open doors

Common Question (Full FDA Q&A available [here](#))

Q: Is food imported to the U.S. from China or other countries affected by the coronavirus disease at risk of spreading COVID-19?

A: Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. associated with imported goods. We continue to learn about how the virus spreads.

Q: Are food products produced in U.S. a risk for the spread of COVID-19?

A: There is no evidence to suggest food produced in the U.S. can transmit COVID-19.

Q: Can I get sick with COVID-19 from touching food, the food packaging, or food contact surfaces, if the coronavirus was present on it?

A: Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Like other viruses, it is possible that the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects. For that reason, it is critical to follow the four key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill.

Q: Can I get COVID-19 from a food worker handling my food?

A: Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. However, the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in some communities in the U.S. The CDC recommends that if you are sick, stay home until you are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Anyone handling, preparing and serving food should always follow safe food handling procedures, such as washing hands and surfaces often.

Q: Should food workers who are ill stay home?

A: CDC recommends that employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees

should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick. We recommend that businesses review CDC's interim guidance for businesses and employers for planning and responding to coronavirus disease. Also see the FDA's Retail Food Protection: Employee Health and Personal Hygiene Handbook.

Q: Should food facilities (grocery stores, manufacturing facilities, restaurants, etc.) perform any special cleaning or sanitation procedures for COVID-19?

A: CDC recommends routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. CDC does not recommend any additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.

View the [EPA-registered disinfectant products on the Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#) list that have qualified under EPA's emerging viral pathogen program for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State, local, and tribal regulators use the Food Code published by the FDA to develop or update their own food safety rules. Generally, FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to maintain clean facilities, including, as appropriate, clean and sanitized food contact surfaces, and to have food safety plans in place. Food safety plans include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls and include procedures for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#).

Q: Since restaurant workers and other service industry employees have ongoing contact with the public, are there any special precautions these workers should take to avoid becoming sick with a respiratory illness such as wearing masks?

A: CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who take care of someone with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

CDC recommends everyday preventive actions for service industry workers and customers:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

